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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 000954

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR J. FRAZER
LONDON FOR C. GURNEY
PARIS FOR C. NEARY
NAIROBI FOR T. PFLAUMER
DS/OP/AF

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [ASEC](#) [ZI](#) [MDC](#)
SUBJECT: MDC BOMBER CONFESSES

REF: A. HARARE 628
[1](#)B. HARARE 516

Classified By: Political Officer Audu Besmer for reasons 1.5 b/d

Summary:

[1](#)1. (S) MDC activist Sedweak Munyaradzi Mupazviripo Munya (protect) has informed embassy officer that he had made and thrown nine petrol bombs at three different ZANU-PF meetings-in-progress on about April 25. It is likely that MDC security head Solomon Chikowero is the highest MDC official aware of Munya's activities. However, in the current economic downturn, there are likely many other unemployed young men with tenuous connections to the MDC who could be inclined to commit similar acts. We continue to press the MDC leadership to make their best effort to nip these activities in the bud. End Summary.

Confessed Bomber

[1](#)2. (S) In a May 8 conversation with Poloff, MDC activist Sedweak Munyaradzi Mupazviripo Munya revealed that he had made and thrown nine petrol bombs at three different ZANU-PF meetings-in-progress on about April 25. Munya said that to his knowledge the highest MDC official involved in initiating these activities was Solomon (Sox) Chikowero, who MDC intelligence officers identify as the head of MDC intelligence (Ref B). Munya called him the head of MDC security. (Note: Chikowero recently fled to South Africa after repeated threats on his life by alleged CIO officers, and is reportedly staying at a training facility where MDC members have allegedly received military-style training in the past. End Note.) Activities such as those undertaken by Munya were executed using the MDC's "action committees" - communication and meetings structures set up by the MDC security department to convey orders and pass information between the MDC leadership and activists around the country. With Chikowero out of the country, Munya said there are no current plans afoot for more bombings.

[1](#)3. (S) Munya said he had attended planning meetings of up to fifteen people led by MDC MP's including Fidelis Mhashu. In the planning meetings, they discussed National Youth Service members (green bombers) beating hundreds of MDC activists and residents in Harare's high-density suburbs following the March 18-19 MDC stayaway. They decided to lob petrol bombs into green bombers' meetings in order to disrupt their planning, and to intimidate them, although these attacks were not intended to kill anyone. Munya's awareness was limited to the planning meetings he had personally attended, and the activities in which he participated.

Targeted Green Bombers

[1](#)4. (S) Munya claims to be a longtime MDC activist whose network of contacts includes hundreds of Chitungwiza residents, including police officers and army soldiers. (Note: Munya's credibility is uncorroborated, and the bombings he described were not reported in the press. End Note.) Munya told Poloff that his contacts revealed that the heads of the "One Commando Barracks" (an army barracks along the airport road near Harare) had supplied green bombers with army T-shirts and camouflage trousers (under the table). Munya also said that green bombers had been assigned as constabularies to Harare Central Police Station and St. Mary's Police Station (near Harare). War veterans who had been hired into the ZRP in 2001 directed these constabularies. According to Munya these two police stations occasionally issued the constabularies loaded AK-47 rifles, which they carried during green bomber raids on the homes of MDC activists in the days following the March 18-19 stayaway. During the raids, the green bombers wore fatigues from One Commando Barracks and carried baton sticks reportedly from the Tomlinson Depot. The constabularies were in plain clothes.

15. (S) Activists, including Munya, first surveiled green bombers for at least three days, noting their meeting times and locations, before attacking. Munya borrowed a car with one or two other associates, and made bombs with 750 ml wine bottles half-filled with petrol and a cloth wick/fuse. Late at night on about April 25 at the Chibuku Stadium, they lobbed three of these bombs onto at least one parked vehicle that they had determined was carrying camouflage trousers and T-shirts from the One Commando Barracks. Green bombers and war vets were holding a meeting nearby.

16. (S) On the same night, they lobbed another four bombs over the wall of the residence of a ZANU-PF Councilor for Seke named Manombo (first name unknown). Green bombers and war vets were holding a large meeting in the yard behind; Munya said they lobbed the bombs over the wall in the direction of the meeting. The bombs lighted, they heard shouting and commotion and some attendees fled the yard over the wall. They following day they heard that no-one had been injured.

17. (S) Again on the same night, they lobbed two bombs into a meeting of green bombers and war vets being held in an open area under a large tree in the light industrial area of Chitungwiza.

Tortured by CIO

18. (S) Although none of these petrol bombings was reported in the press, on April 30 suspected CIO agents raided Munya's house at about 2 o'clock in the morning. They fired a tear gas canister into his house, pried his security gate off with a power drill, and took him to Harare Central Police Station. They interrogated him, beat him with broom handles on the kidneys, put a large clamp on the back of his neck, poured water on him, forced him to crawl on his belly like an inch worm, and administered electric shocks. They told him there were only two options, that he would need to go to jail for other charges he faces (see paragraph 10 below), or he must die.

19. (S) They accused him of being the MDC's general coordinator for explosives, and for participating in various high-profile petrol bombings around the time of the March 18-19 stayaway including a school bus carrying primary school aged children in Chitungwiza, a Zimbabwe United Passenger Company (ZUPCO) bus in Epworth, and the ZANU-PF offices in Kwekwe. (Note: Other sources familiar with the Kwekwe event have suggested that when ZANU-PF youths petrol bombed the General Agricultural and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe (GAPWUZ) Kwekwe offices in March, the fire spread to the ZANU-PF offices next door. End Note.) (Further Note: It is unclear why they accused him of these bombings and not the petrol bombings he had actually participated in only days earlier. End further note.)

Charged with Assaulting Ben Menashe

10. (S) Poloff first met Munya in February at the treason trial of MDC President Morgan Tsvangirai and other MDC leaders. In about the second week of the trial, Munya actually confronted the State's star witness Ari Ben Menashe and asked him whether he was aware that ordinary Zimbabweans could hardly feed themselves while he, Ben Menashe, was living extravagantly at the Sheraton Hotel, eating rice and chips at taxpayers' expense and publicly lying to everyone. Ben Menashe responded that he was not aware of the suffering. Their conversation was interrupted by a suspected CIO agent who accosted Munya. Police then arrested Munya and charged him with assaulting Ben Menashe.

11. (S) On about May 4, Munya happened to meet Maxwell Matanire, the Magistrate handling Munya's case on charges of assaulting Ben Menashe, at a local shop near Munya's home in Chitungwiza. The Magistrate, who has been suspended until June 23 pending an investigation into trumped up allegations of fraud, took him aside and cautioned him that he was being forced to convict Munya and sentence him to at least four years in prison. Matanire said the only way for the authorities to fire a sitting Magistrate was to convict him on corruption or fraud charges and that the charges against him were fabricated to influence his decisions, and specifically to gain a conviction against Munya. Matanire said that suspected CIO agents had taken him to a meeting with Vice President Joseph Msika who told him, among other things, that he must convict Munya for four years or more, or he would lose his magistrate job in the pending fraud investigation.

Comment:

12. (S) Although some of the events Munya described dovetail with other pieces of information we have obtained separately, it is not possible to corroborate the claims he has made. We are also unable to judge how compartmentalized the alleged

MDC structures he described may be. There is no credible evidence of awareness or direction of the actions of Munya and his accomplices at levels of MDC leadership above Chikowero. Morgan Tsvangirai, Welshman Ncube and other MDC leaders have repeatedly assured us that violence is antithetical to MDC policy. This does not mean that all elements within MDC share this view. With Chikowero out of the country, it is possible that violence of this nature will cease, if he is indeed the organizing force. However, we note that in Sox' absence a bomb squad official was killed while handling a suspicious package sent to the tobacco auction floor about ten days ago in a still unexplained attack reported to us (but not in the press) by the head of the Tobacco Growers' Association and corroborated by other sources. In addition to whatever organized forces might exist, there is also the legion of disaffected and unemployed urban youth with tenuous connections to the opposition who may be inclined to act on their own, whatever stated MDC policy might be. We will continue to press the MDC leadership to counsel their supporters to eschew violence, and given the sensitive nature of this issue, we have suspended further contacts with Munya and will follow suit with Chikowero, should the latter return to Zimbabwe. End Comment.

WHITEHEAD